

Facts & feelings

Talking about:

Skills

Utah State University Department of Family & Human Development and Cooperative Extension Service

You Gotta Have Skills

Joe is 14. He is sitting in class when his mind wanders a little. He pictures himself going one-on-one against Michael Jordan, spinning, and making the winning basket. People cheer. Suddenly, Joe realizes the teacher is talking again, and Joe's dream disappears.

Maybe you want to be a great athlete, or a teacher or an artist. It's nice to dream about things, but we can't make dreams happen unless we develop the required skills.

A skill is the ability to do something well.

As you grow older, your hopes and dreams may include being married and being a parent in a happy family. These dreams can come true, but they also require skills.

Some of the most important skills you need to be successful are the ability to make decisions and the ability to be assertive, to say "yes" and "no." This newsletter is about just such skills. These skills are important to help you make the choices that will lead to a happy life.

Assertiveness skills make it so that you can stand up for yourself without being rude to others.

How To Say "No"

It can be hard to say "no." Teens don't like to be left out. You don't want your friends to make fun of you. How do you say "no" and still keep your friends? Here are some ways to try.

NEVER let yourself be pushed into doing something you feel unsure about. You have to be responsible for what you do. Don't let others pressure you to do something that you know is a bad idea. Don't turn your life over to someone else.

Distraction: "I don't know about that. Let me think about it. What do you think about the game tonight?"

Assertiveness: "I don't want to do that."

Blame: "My parents won't let me do that." (Your parents won't mind.)

Confrontation:

Humor: "I can't do that. It'll give me a rash!"

"Why are you pressuring me to do something that I don't want to do?"

If Only She Had Kept Saying "No"

What would you tell the girl who wrote the following letter?

After I had been out with my boyfriend a few times he started pressuring me to have sex with him. At first I said no and he seemed hurt. Once when he was trying to get me to have sex I could tell that he would be angry if we didn't. So I went along and gave in. Then I felt hurt and guilty. When I cried he said he was sorry. But I still feel resentment toward him. What should I have done?

What skills did the girl lack? If she had been more assertive, would she have given in? If the guy had really cared, would he have pressured the girl to have sex? If someone pressures you to have sex, do you have the skills to deal with it?

Are you making decisions about . . . *who* you go with, *where* you go, and *what* you do so that you are less likely to get in a situation like this?

Assertiveness skills help you to stand up for yourself. It can be hard to say "no!" But the consequences of saying yes can be a lot harder to deal with. "No" isn't just for girls. Boys need to say "no" too.

"NO"



"NO"



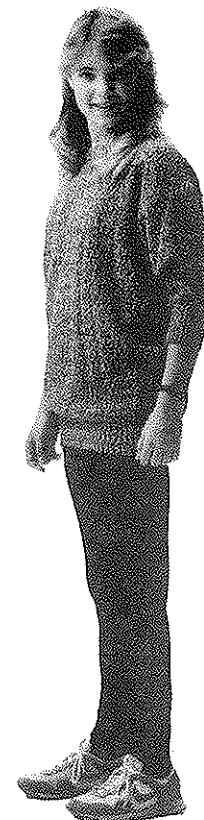
"NO"



"NO"



"NO"



"YES"



IT
ONLY
TAKES
ONCE.

THE CHILDREN'S DEFENSE FUND

No, No, and No Again

Saying "no" to sex isn't something that teens only need to do once. Especially with regard to having sex, "no" might need to be repeated over and over.

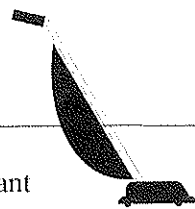
Say it Like You Mean It

1. Face the person.
2. Look him/her in the eye.
3. Use a calm but serious voice
4. Start with the positive: "I like doing things with you, but . . ."
5. Say no: "I'm not going to . . ."
6. Suggest something else: "Why don't we . . ."
7. If the person continues to pressure you, repeat "no." If the person won't respect your decision, you can leave.

When you say no to something you don't believe in you are showing respect for yourself and your goals in life. People may give you a hard time for your decision. But if you say "no" in the right way, they will still respect you.

Like any skill, saying "no" takes practice.

Don't Be a Vacuum



It is important to say "no" to some things. But when you say "no" to certain parties or certain places, what are you going to do instead? When you take something away, it leaves an empty place. A place with nothing in it is called a vacuum. When you're saying "no" all the time, you may feel like you're missing out by being a vacuum. It can be hard to keep saying "no" if you don't have something to fill the vacuum with. If your vacuum gets tired of being empty it may start picking up dirt!

Saying "yes" to the right things won't leave as much room for the things you would have to say "no" to. You should say "yes" when a decision shows your respect for others and for yourself. Plan ahead. Know what you want. Have activities that show respect for yourself and others. Say "yes" to the best things in your life, including respect.

What Would you Say To These Lines?

Everybody's doing it.

"I'm not. And I feel good about my decision."

If you're grown up, you have sex.

"I believe that being grown up means making sensible decisions. Having sex now would *not* make sense."

If you loved me, you'd want to have sex.

"Love and sex are not the same. And a big part of love is respect. If you care for me you'll respect my decision to wait."

You're a drag. I think I'll date someone more fun.

"If sex is your only way of having fun, you should date someone else."

How can you turn me on and then say no?

"Being turned on is your problem. A cold shower may help. But I won't solve your problem by giving you my body."

But I want to marry you some day.

"Marriage is a long way off for me. Right now, I'm not ready for sex."

You should try it. You'll like it.

"Trying it out is a dumb reason to do something you don't believe in."

Everybody is making fun of you for being such a prude.

"I feel good about my decision."

It looks great in the movies.

"Movies are a make-believe world where people can fly and leap tall buildings in a single bound. Sex is great when two people have saved it for marriage. It's not right for me now."

Q: Won't I lose friends if I tell them "no?"

A: Not usually, unless you put them down when you say "no." If you tell people that they are stupid or bad, they might like you less. So, be pleasant, but be firm.

Q: What if my friends keep pressuring me to do things that seem wrong to me?

A: Keep telling them "no." What kind of friend is someone who wants you to do something you don't want to?

IT'S YOUR TURN

Here are some possible ways you might feel pressured to have sex. For each situation, write down an *assertive* response--one that is direct and shows self-respect without putting the other person down.

Pressure Line: "Don't worry. Leave everything to me."

Assertive Response: _____

Pressure Line: "It's not healthy to hold back your sex drive."

Assertive Response: _____

Pressure Line: "Nothing bad will happen."

Assertive Response: _____

Pressure Line: "Nobody will find out."

Assertive Response: _____

Pressure Line: "Just this once."

Assertive Response: _____

Try these lines on your parents and see how they would answer. Talk about other pressure lines people use and how you can respond assertively.



Looking at SKILLS



Have you ever said "no" to someone? It's not always easy, but it can be a powerful thing to do. Being able to say what you really mean gives you a good feeling of being in charge of yourself. You can improve your skills of being able to say what you mean if you practice them. It will take some work, and you might feel awkward standing up for yourself at first, but you *can* take charge. This newsletter, and the Facts and Feelings video "Talking about Skills," can help.



Facts & feelings

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Facts

&
feelings

Talking about:

Meanings

Utah State University Department of Family & Human Development and Cooperative Extension Service

A Kiss is a Kiss Is a

Everybody knows what a kiss means. It means two people really like each other, right? Or does it mean that a girl had a good time and she's "paying" for the date? Could it mean the guy proved he can get a kiss and now he's going to tell his friends? Things don't always mean the same to people. When John and Mary kiss goodnight, it probably means something different to each of them. He may think it means she will go out with him again. She may think it's the only way to get him off her porch.

The meaning of a kiss depends on a lot of things. Is the kiss between a

mother and child? Is it between spouses as one of them leaves for work? Is it between two ambassadors from countries where they kiss each other on both cheeks when they meet? The point is, a kiss, or some other way of showing affection, doesn't mean the same thing to everyone.

It's important to know how you feel about physical affection like a kiss. It's really important to know what it means to you to have sexual intercourse with another person. It may seem like sex means the same thing to everyone, but it doesn't.

Where do meanings come from? We get meanings from other people, watching what they do and sometimes copying them. These could be family members or our friends. But a lot of the meanings we get about sexuality we get from watching people on TV, in the movies or in music videos. You and your family may agree with those meanings sometimes, but a lot of times you may not. If you're seeing messages about the meaning of sex all the time, you may not be noticing them. These messages about the meaning of sexuality could be influencing what you think.

Meanings in Media Messages

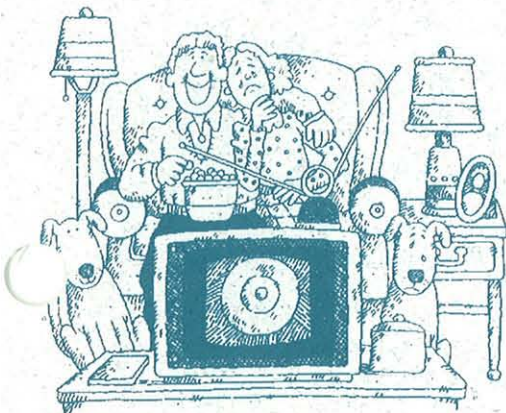
The media, including TV, radio, newspapers, and magazines have had a big impact on the meaning we attach to

things. For example, some advertisements suggest that if you smoke, you will be happy, successful, youthful and attractive. Research indicates that smoking makes people sick, weak, wrinkled and more likely to die younger. Everyone knows about the research, but many people still start smoking with the belief that it will somehow make them cool and happy.

If the media can affect people's attitudes about smoking, even when there is proof that smoking is bad for you, it is clear that the media can influence our attitudes about sexuality. What are some of the messages about sex from the media?

- Everyone is doing it
- Sex makes you more of a woman or man
- Good looking, smart, successful people have sex
- Sex makes you mature
- Sex is the most important thing in life
- If you want to be somebody, have sex

There are several reasons why advertisers, movie producers and others use sex. They know everyone is interested! It can help them sell things or get people to watch their show. But you can get a lot of mistaken ideas about the meaning of sexuality from these sources.



Sexuality is More Than the Facts

We get messages about sexuality, especially about sexual relations between people, but sexuality doesn't mean only that. It includes how you feel about yourself as a person, especially as a male or a female, how you think people ought to act towards others, and it includes how you feel about the role of sex in life in general. The *meanings* sexuality has to you will have a big influence on your relationships with others.

People disagree about sexuality. The important thing is to know what sex means to you, and be sure your actions are based on what *you* think, not on some meaning that you don't agree with.

Sexuality is more than just sex. It is not just something you *do*, it is part of who you *are*.

Everybody's got to Have a Body

One of the messages that comes through in the media (TV, movies, magazines, and so on) is that you have to look a certain way to be OK. It's called sex appeal. Being sexy. Women are supposed to have just the right shape that they show off in sexy clothing, and men are supposed to be handsome and muscular. The message is, if you look like this, the opposite sex will pay attention to you.

Is your body the most important thing about you? How you feel about your body is important, but you are much more than your body. All your thoughts, ideas, beliefs, talents, and personality make up who you really are.

A Double Standard for Males and Females

Another important part of sexuality is what we think it means to be a man or a woman. Some of our ideas may be based on stereotyped ideas about how men and women are supposed to act. These ideas about what it means to be a man or a woman, called *sex roles*, include things like:

Males are:

- Unemotional, never cry
- Strong, muscular
- Aggressive, active
- Sexually experienced
- Insensitive to others

Females are:

- Emotional, cry often
- Weak, delicate
- Shy, quiet
- Sexually inexperienced
- Sensitive to others

If people think these are the ways they're *supposed* to act, they could have some confused attitudes about sex, like:

- Guys should be sexually involved, but not girls
- Girls are responsible for limiting sexual involvement, not guys
- Girls shouldn't blame guys for trying to get sex, "that's just the way they are"
- It's OK for guys to try to talk a girl into having sex, that's what "real" men do
- Girls aren't capable of standing up for themselves
- Guys should know all about sex

A guy who believes these ideas might think he has to prove he's a real man by having sex. He might even think it's his right to use a girl for sex.

A girl who believes these ideas might think it's not feminine to tell a guy "no" and really mean it. She might even think sex is the only reason someone might like her.

These stereotypes lack *respect* for women and also for men. It shows more respect if there is just one standard of sexual behavior for both males and females. That standard is based on respect for yourself and others, and not letting yourself be used or trying to use someone else.

A Single Standard

Both males and females can say "no."

Both males and females share responsibility for controlling sexual involvement.

Neither males nor females need to have sex to prove they're OK.

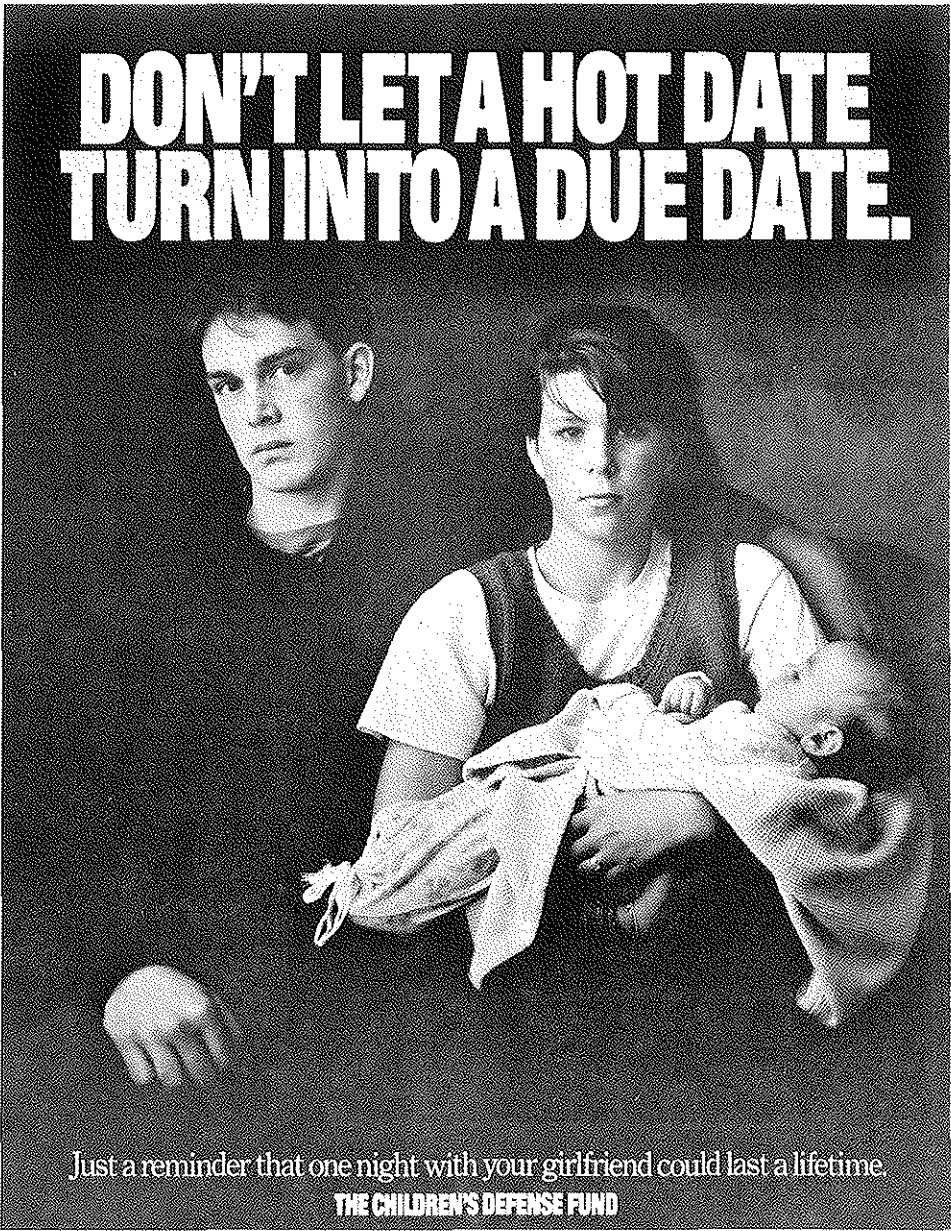
Both males and females should reach all the potential they can, without letting premature sex ruin their plans.

Be a Media Critic

People often watch TV, movies, or advertisements without thinking what the messages are. When messages about sex are repeated over and over, they can start to influence people's attitudes and values. Instead of just sitting there and taking these messages in, it's important to think about what you're seeing.

Ask yourself:

- Do these people look like regular people or are they "superbodies?"
- How are men and women depicted? How do people show their feelings?
- Are situations realistic? Are most people/couples/families like that?
- Are the consequences of having sex realistic?
- What are the values of the people involved? Do you agree with their values?
- Do people show *respect* for each other?



It's Your Turn

Have family members write down their answers to the question "What does our family say about . . . ?" issues like the following:



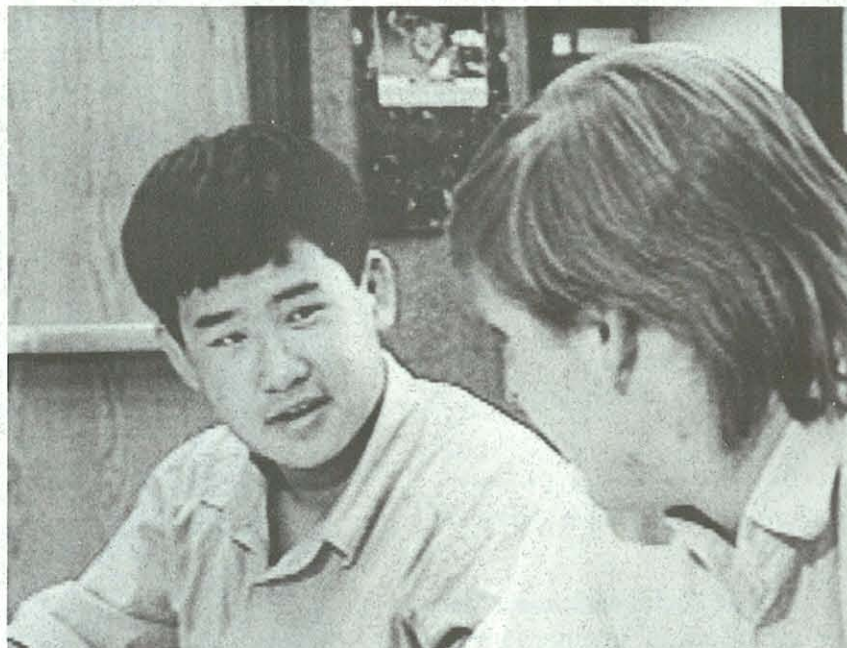
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|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| • Dating | • Using drugs or alcohol |
| • Marriage | • Having children |
| • Kissing on dates | • Teenage pregnancy |
| • Having sex before marriage | • Music for teens |
| • Going with someone | • Extracurricular activities |
| • Getting a job (now/later) | • Chores at home |
| • Grades | • Men's and women's roles |
| • The age you leave home | • Movie Ratings |

You and your parents can answer them individually and then compare answers.

Looking at MEANINGS



The facts of life are basic and the same for everyone. Values differ, though, and deciding what it all should mean in our own life is the important part. It's also the part that can be hard to figure out. Have you talked to your parents about what the facts mean to them? This newsletter, and the Facts and Feelings video "Talking about Meanings," can help.



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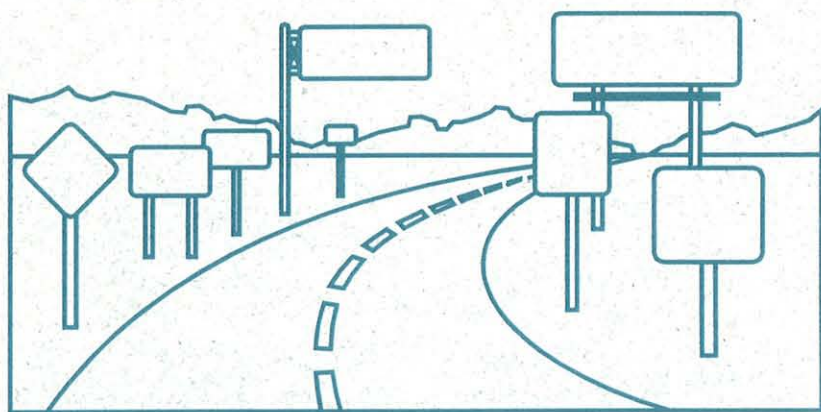
Facts & *feelings*

Talking about:

Choices

Utah State University Department of Family & Human Development and Cooperative Extension Service

Pick Your Future . . . Any Future



As an adolescent, you're faced with a lot of choices. You've probably been learning, as everybody has to, that making choices is difficult. When it is hard to decide, sometimes we want to have things both ways. We want to goof off and still get good grades. We like not working but we also want money. In real life, though every choice we make opens the door on one possibility and closes it on another.

Making choices is like choosing a road to travel. At first, the roads lie fairly close together. But gradually, as we travel farther along, the roads get farther apart, until their final destinations are very different. You have to think about where you want to end up before you choose the road you take. The roads you choose now will make all the difference.

Billy is a 16 year old whose roads have led him to a life on the street near Times Square in New York City. Billy left his hometown to get away from rules at home, at school and at church. He wanted to be free. There are hundreds of thousands of teens each year who find out that this road ends in begging for money, selling their bodies, and trying to numb the pain with alcohol and drugs.

Brenda got pregnant at 15 and had her first child. Her life was hard at home, and she felt trapped there. After all, her parents treated her like a kid. She's 22 now, and her road has lead to living on welfare in a cramped apartment in a dangerous neighborhood, with the three children she now has.

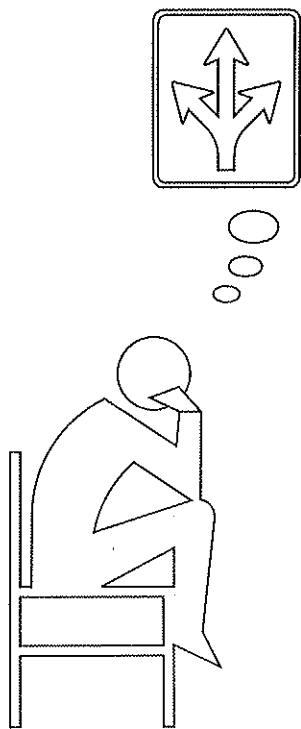
Arnie is a 17 year old, whose road dead-ended in a collision with a tree trunk. He was only a block from getting his girlfriend home after he'd been drinking at a party, when he ran into the tree that killed her. Now he feels guilty nearly all the time.

Ali has AIDS. She was 16 when her parents were out of town and she invited over the older guy she'd had her eye on. He brought champagne, flowers and AIDS. Now she's 24 and the clock is ticking. She's in and out of the hospital because her body can't fight off infections. She feels really sick most of the time. She talks to groups sometimes to tell them the facts about AIDS and she hopes she's doing some good, but her time is running out.

Neither Billy, nor Brenda, nor Arnie, nor Ali started out to arrive at the end of the road they have reached. They wanted to have fun and be happy. They wanted to be free. They wanted to be grown up. Those are good goals. But they chose roads that lead in different directions.



Choosing Your Route



Suppose you wanted to take a trip someplace. What would be the best way to decide how to get there? You could suddenly pack up and just leave. You could put off deciding. You could just “not decide” and hope everything would work out by itself. You could let someone else decide for you. These ways of deciding may be OK when your decisions aren’t that important - like what kind of sandwich to have or what TV show to watch. But when the decision is important, the best way to decide is to look at all the possibilities, evaluating the benefits and costs of each, and then pick the best one.

Say you want to go to Yellowstone Park or the Statue of Liberty. Choosing a route to get there is a lot like the process we go through when we make any decision. We have to decide on a goal (get to Yellowstone or the Statue of Liberty). Then we should list as many possible solutions as we can (find all the ways to get there). Next, we should look at the benefits and costs of the alternative ways to go.

To decide how to go to Yellowstone or the Statue of Liberty, you would have to consider things like:

- time: how long does each route take?
- comfort: which way of traveling would be the most comfortable?
- cost: which way is the cheapest?
- scenery: which way would let you see the most?

Usually, it’s not as simple as one choice having all the advantages while the other choices have none. For example, the fastest way may be the most expensive and the least scenic. The cheapest may be the least comfortable. The most scenic may be the slowest. You would have to choose the route that gave you the most benefits, and the fewest drawbacks, according to what you valued most (scenery, comfort, economy, or speed) and what your resources are (money, car, or discount tickets). The following steps outline the process we have just described:

- List all the possible alternatives,
- List the advantages and disadvantages of each,
- Choose the one with the most advantages and fewest disadvantages that fits with your values and available resources.

Predicting Destinations

Before you can decide which road to take, you have to look ahead to see where you would probably end up if you took that road. You’ve got to predict what the result of your decision would be. Try and predict what would happen if you:

Choice	Result
• dropped out of high school?	
• graduated from college?	
• joined the military	
• got arrested for shoplifting	
• drove after drinking	
• got married in high school	
• ran away	
• got pregnant or got someone else pregnant as a teen	

After thinking about your answers, talk with your parents about what they think the consequences of these choices would be. See how your answers compare.



Sexual Decisions

Perhaps you have not thought about your future sexual decisions. But if you’re going to predict your destination, and think about the pros and cons, you’ve got to give yourself some time to think about them. If you wait to decide, someone else may pressure you to make a decision that will meet their needs . . . not yours.

Some teens are in a big hurry to have sexual experiences. They are the first to start kissing and trying other physical involvements. They may even have sexual intercourse. Teens have sex for reasons like these:

- a. To get affection, love
- b. To keep their boyfriend or girlfriend
- c. To say they’ve done it
- d. To feel like they are adult
- e. To fit in with others
- f. To rebel against parents or other authorities

Sexual Decisions (continued)

How good are these reasons?

- a. For affection. Part of liking a person is respecting them. Having sex without commitment often causes people to lose respect and affection for each other.
- b. To keep a boy/girlfriend. Actually, having sex often results in the relationship breaking up.
- c. To say they’ve done it. Lots of teens who say they have, haven’t. It’s just bragging.
- d. To feel like they are an adult. It is more adult to plan for the future. Having sex is risking a pregnancy

or sexually transmitted disease that could ruin all your plans.

- e. To fit in. It may make you fit in, but with whom? Having sex might change your reputation for the worse.
- f. To rebel. Having sex may or may not hurt your parents, but it will almost certainly hurt you.

Some teens are in a hurry to have sexual experiences because they are not very happy with themselves, their family or with school. They hope sex will make them feel happy and important. Unfortunately, sex doesn’t

do that. In fact, for teens, sex makes life and relationships much more complicated and confusing.

How are you going to decide about getting involved with sex? Some choose by not deciding, or by letting someone else decide for them. Thinking ahead increases the odds that you

It's Your Turn

Choose one of the situations below and go through the steps of decision-



making. After you decide what you would do, have your parent tell you what he or she would do. Then tell what you would do. Talk about the reasons behind your choices.

Problem 1: Friday night is the big game with your rival school. It is also your cousin’s wedding. You want to go to both. What should you do?

Problem 2: A girl is out on date with a guy and he starts to feel her breasts. What should she do?

Problem 3: You’ve been asked to join the track team for spring season. You also want to be in the school play. Both play rehearsal and team practice are after school. What should you do?

Problem 4: Your boy/girlfriend tells you at school that his/her parents will be going out of town for the weekend. He/she wants you to tell your parents something so you can stay overnight.

Problem 5: A guy has been out on a date. He and his date talked and had a good time. But he’s worried about what to say when his friends ask him what he “got.” What should he say?

The one on the left will finish high school before the one on the right.



Adolescent pregnancy isn't just a problem in America, it's a crisis. To learn more about a social issue that concerns all of us, write: Children's Defense Fund, 122 C Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001.

The Children's Defense Fund.



Looking at CHOICES



Making choices is like choosing a road to travel. You have to think about where you want to end up before you choose the road you take. Some teens choose a road of sexual involvement that, unfortunately, leads them to a lot of problems they didn't want to have. As a teenager, you have some important choices to make about where you're going. Talking to your parents about your choices can help you get where you want to go. This newsletter, and the Facts and Feelings video "Talking About Choices," can help.



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Facts & feelings

Talking about:

Values

Utah State University Department of Family & Human Development and Cooperative Extension Service

MAKE A WISH



Remember lighting all the candles on your birthday cake and then making a wish before you blew them out? Or, have you ever made a wish and then thrown a coin into a fountain to make it come true?

Star light, star bright,
First star I see tonight,
Wish I may, Wish I might,
Have the wish I wish tonight.
Children's Rhyme

What would you wish for if wishes really could come true? Would you wish for a lot of money? Would you wish for a fancy car? Would you wish to be on the varsity athletic team?

Would you wish to get good grades, go to college and get a good job someday? Would you wish to get along better with your family and friends? Would you wish for good health? Your answer would say something about your values.

The things you want and the goals you have are based on your values. Values are ideas or beliefs you feel strongly about.

One of the main jobs you have during your teen years is deciding what you really want to do in your life. If you decide what is really important to you, then it's easier to choose what is worth working for. The goals you set now will make a big difference in where you end up and in how happy you are with yourself and with your life.

VALUES AND SEX

Suppose a genie appeared who could give you a wish. If you didn't think about it a little, you might use your wish up and then think of something else more important to you that you should have wished for instead. You might even use your wish for something you regret later. Sex is kind

of like that. *You need to think about what is really important to you about sex so you make the right decisions.*

Is popularity most important? If you think it is, you might make the mistake of having sex if you thought that would make you popular.

Is being considered an adult most important? If you think it is, you could make the mistake of having sex before you were ready for it if you thought that would make you seem more mature.

Is keeping sex something special most important? If you think it is, you would want to be sure that you were mature enough, that you really loved the person, and that you could really live up to your commitment to that other person. For now, it would mean you should wait.

Everybody's values about sex may not be exactly the same. But the value about sex that everybody should have in common is *respect*.

See if you agree with these statements:

- It's wrong for anyone to try to force someone else to be involved in sexual activity.
- It's wrong to let yourself be used for sex.
- It's wrong to think that some behavior is OK for boys that's not OK for girls.
- It's wrong to blame someone else for your own behavior.

- It's wrong to use love as a justification to have sex.

What makes these things wrong? All these behaviors show a lack of *respect*, either for others or for ourselves. Respect means that our rights are just as important as someone else's, and that their rights are just as important as ours.

Respect also means treating others with equality - giving them the same rights we want. It includes being responsible for our own behavior and using self-control. Abstaining from sex before marriage shows respect for ourselves and others.

RESPECT FOR OTHERS

Treating others with respect can be difficult. It can be hard to show respect to others when they disagree with you. For example, if your parents said to you, “We don’t think your friends are a good influence on you,” you might feel angry. You could respond, “You don’t know what you’re talking about. You don’t even know them.” You and your parents would probably be on the way to a big argument because neither of you felt respected. It would work better to say, “What don’t you like about them?” After listening, you still might not agree with them, but it does show respect for their opinions and makes it more likely they will show respect for yours. You might have a better chance to explain the good things you see in your friends.

It's important to show respect for everyone, including your parents, because how you treat people about things in general has something to do with how you treat others when it comes to sex. If you think your rights are more important than anyone else's,

you might think it is OK to take advantage of someone else for sex, just as long as you have a good time. Or, if you do something for someone, like helping with homework or spending money on a date, you might think that person “owes” you something with sex. But, if you turn it around, would it be OK for that person to treat you that way? If the answer is no, then you’re probably not showing respect.

RESPECT FOR YOURSELF

Showing respect for yourself might be harder than you would guess. For example, if you have respect for yourself, you do not let other people pressure you into doing things you feel are not right. Sometimes we do what others tell us to do because we want to be popular or be grown-up or because it sounds like fun.

But self-respect means standing up for your own values. Refusing to do things that seem wrong to you may seem hard. But it shows that you have self-respect . . . and it will make you feel much better about yourself.

ARE YOU HEADED WHERE YOU WANT TO BE?

If you don't know where
you're going, any road will
get you there.

Anon.

You may not often think about your values. But it's important that you do. If you don't stop to decide what's most important to you, you may spend your time and effort doing

things that aren't based on what you really think is important. To decide if something is a value to you, ask yourself these questions:

- Have I really thought about it?
- Did I choose it myself?
- Do I believe in it?
- Am I proud of it?
- Would I tell others it's my value?
- Do I live by my value?

I desire so to conduct [my] affairs...that if at the end...I have lost every other friend on earth, I shall at least have one friend left, and that friend shall be down inside of me.

Abraham Lincoln

IT'S YOUR TURN

Now or Later?

Sometimes the same things can be good for you or bad for you. It depends on the *timing*. What's most important now? Use some important values to decide.

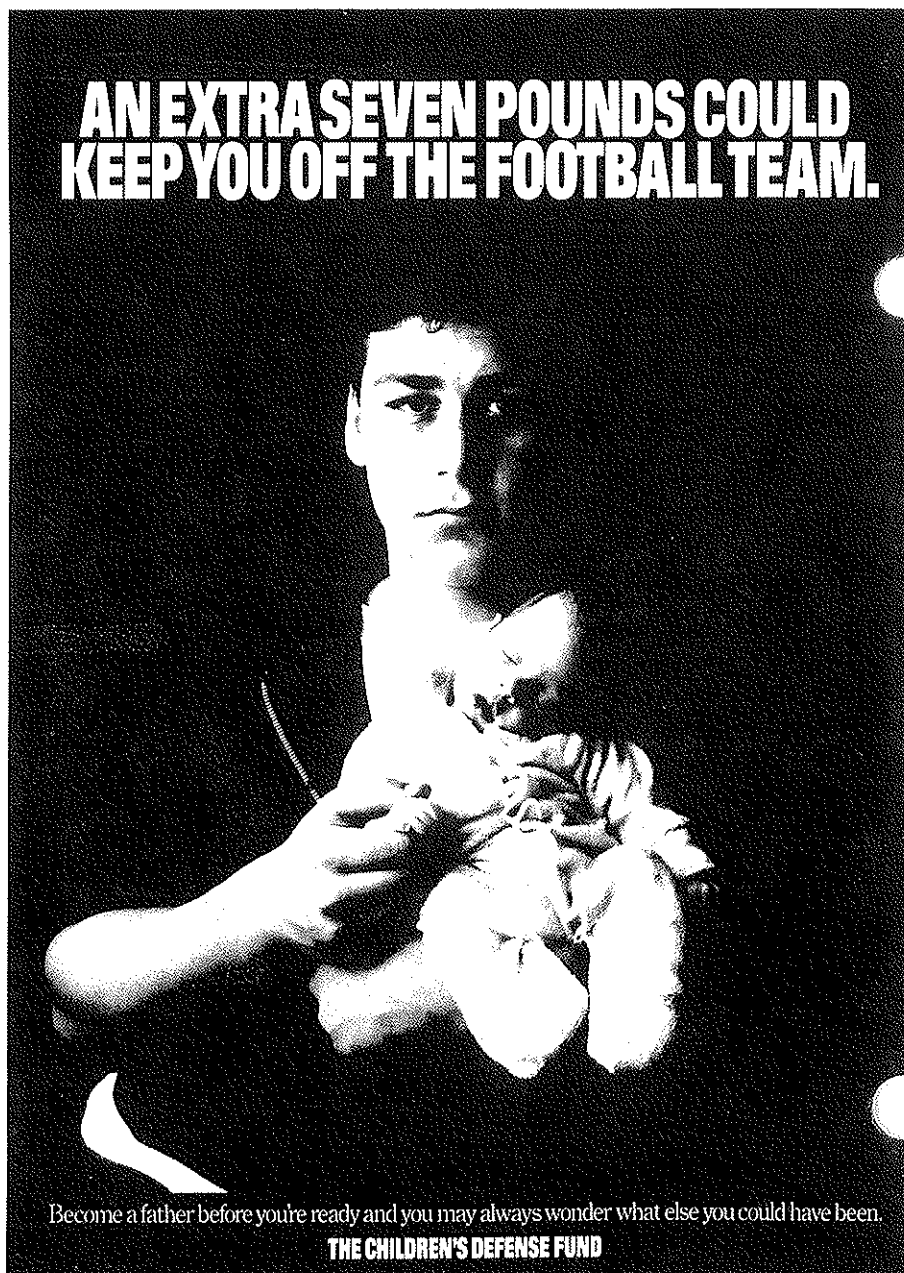
Four important values for you to have about sex are:

1. respect (for yourself and others)
2. equality (same standards for everyone)
3. self-control (being in charge of your actions)
4. abstinence (waiting to have sex)

Here is a list of things that are all good for you, depending on their timing. Put a check under the value or values that would help you decide when doing the thing would be good for you. Then put a check in the column under now, later, or now and later.

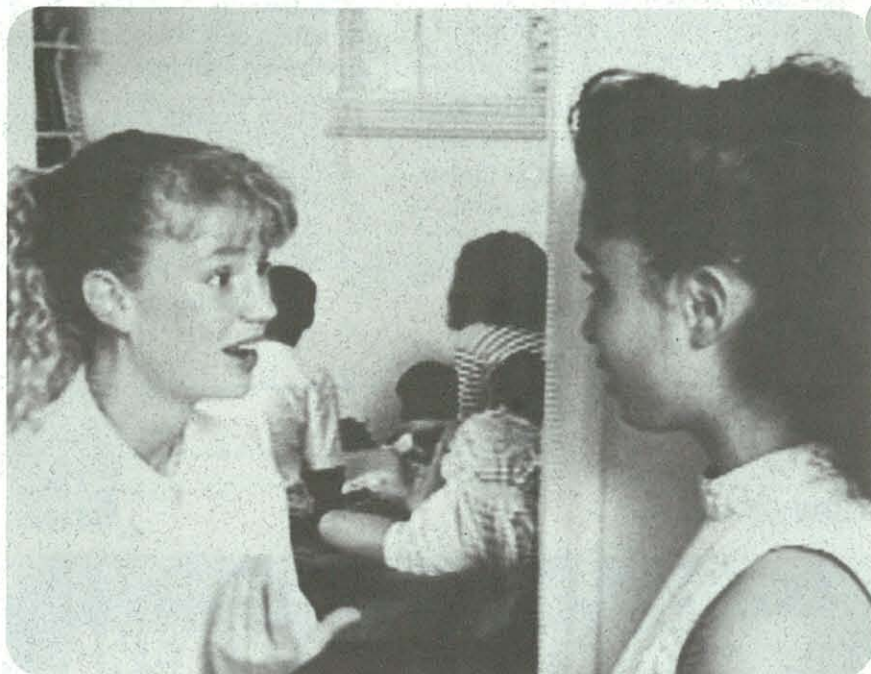
Ask Your Parents

- “What are your values about sex?”
- “Why should I wait to have sex until I’m married?”
- “Who should keep sex under control?”
- “How do people wait to have sex until they’re married?”

[illegible]

Looking at VALUES

Have you ever asked yourself, "Who am I?" or "What do I want to be?" Your answers will depend on what you think is important -- your values -- and values can be hard to figure out sometimes. Talking to your parents can help you think more clearly about your values. This newsletter and the Facts and Feelings video #2 "Talking About Values" can help.



Facts & feelings

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Facts

&
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Talking about:

Facts

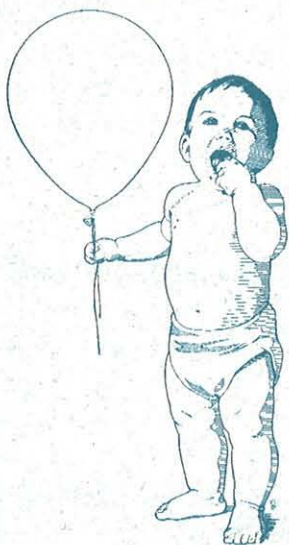
Utah State University Department of Family & Human Development and Cooperative Extension Service

WHERE DO BABIES COME FROM?

Sometime or other, most children ask “Where do babies come from?” That can be a hard question for parents to answer.

You’ve heard the joke that the stork brings babies, or that they grow a big cabbage in the garden. Another version is that they come in baskets on the front steps. Of course, that’s not where babies really come from.

A man and woman together are able to make a baby. How babies are made and how



they are born is pretty amazing. It’s not really something to hide, but it is something to have a lot of respect for.

Kids usually get pretty curious about how this really happens, and they come up with some crazy ideas. At first, the facts can seem even more amazing than the stories. The facts are important, and this newsletter will give you some accurate information about your body and how it works.

You may also have some confusing feelings about sex. Is it bad or is it good? Is it healthy or is it unnatural? Being able to talk about your feelings helps. Even if you think you know the facts, you could learn more from talking to your parents about this important and interesting subject.

The FACTS of life are basic and the same for everyone. But people act differently who have the same facts. Getting the facts is the easy part. Behaving responsibly is more difficult and more important.

BODY EQUIPMENT BASICS

Mr. Rogers, the children’s TV personality, wrote a song for young children to help them understand the differences between boys and girls. The words say “Girls are fancy on the inside, boys are fancy on the outside, everybody’s fancy, everybody’s fine, your body’s fancy, and so is mine.”

That’s a pretty good way to summarize the differences between female bodies

and male bodies. All males or all females are not alike either. Your body may not be the same size or shape as someone else’s. That’s OK. Your body, like every human body, has amazing potential.

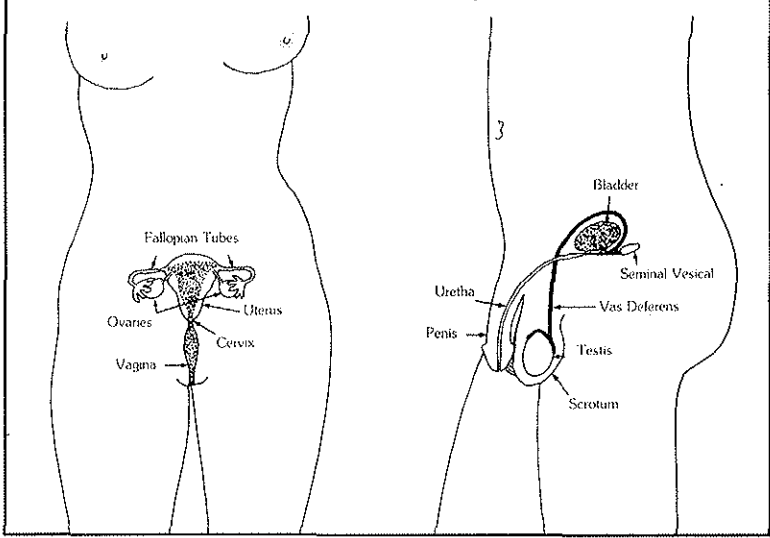
You’ll notice that we use the proper names for the male and female organs. Because people sometimes feel awkward about sex, they make up

all kinds of slang names for body parts. Besides being confusing, this can make sex seem like something that is dirty or bad. Knowing the right names makes it easier to talk about.



BODY EQUIPMENT BASICS (Continued)

Female and Male Reproductive Systems



The female reproductive system:

Ovaries: The ovaries produce the hormone called estrogen that gives women the secondary sex characteristics of females -- body hair, breasts, wider hips, and so on. They also produce other hormones important in being able to have a baby. When a girl is born, the ovaries contain thousands of immature ova (eggs) that will mature as she gets older. The ovaries are about the size of shelled almonds.

Fallopian Tubes: The tubes that carry the egg from the ovary to the uterus. From the outside, they are about as thick as a drinking straw and about four inches long.

Uterus: The organ where the baby grows. When a woman is not pregnant, the uterus is hollow, with thick walls of muscle. It is about the size of a pear.

Cervix: The opening of the uterus into the vagina.

Vagina: The passage leading from the uterus to the vulva. Also called the birth canal.

Urethra: The tube that carries urine from the bladder to the opening in the vulva.

Vulva: The folds of skin around the opening of the vagina and urethra.

The male reproductive system:

Testicles: Also called testes, the testicles produce the hormone called testosterone that gives men the secondary sex characteristics of males - body hair, beard, deepened voice, and so on. The testicles also produce sperm.

Scrotum: The pouch below the penis that the testicles are in. This pouch can hang further from or closer to the body to keep the testicles at the right temperature.

Penis: The male's sex organ. It contains spongy tissues that can fill with blood to make the penis stiff. That is called an erection.

Urethra: The tube in the penis that carries both urine and seminal fluid containing sperm to the opening of the penis.

IF YOU'RE EMBARRASSED BY A PIMPLE TRY EXPLAINING THIS.

Being a teenager is tough enough. Why make things more difficult by becoming a mother too?

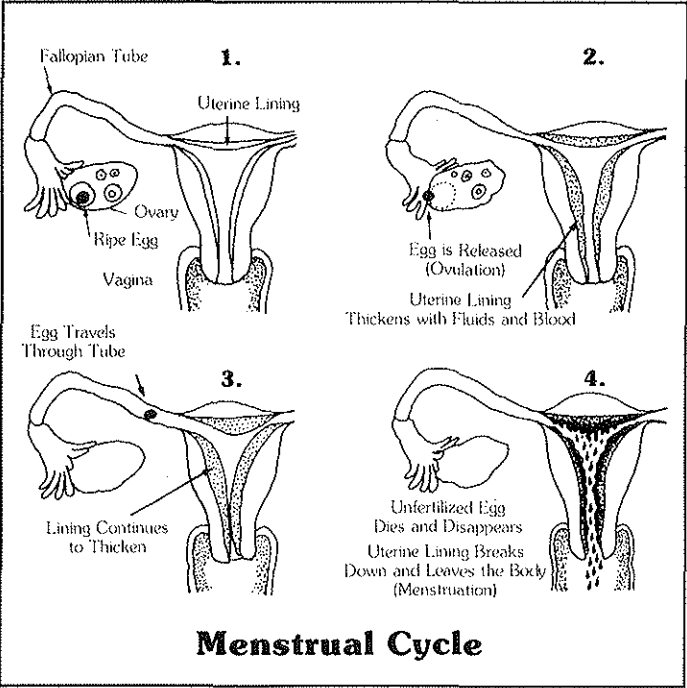
THE CHILDREN'S DEFENSE FUND

HOW YOUR EQUIPMENT WORKS

During puberty, boys and girls mature so that they are physically capable of being parents. All the equipment has been in place since birth. At puberty, the hormones give the equipment the signal to activate.

Girls. One of the biggest events for girls in growing up is the beginning of menstruation, which means "monthly flow." It is part of a complex process that the female body goes through every month to prepare itself for conception. Each month, an egg is released from one of the ovaries. The egg travels down one of the fallopian tubes to the uterus, which has been getting ready to nourish the egg if it is fertilized. If the egg is not fertilized, the lining of the uterus, which has thickened and filled with blood, breaks down and leaves the body. The female has a flow of blood for three to five days, and then the lining of the uterus starts preparing again for the next egg to be released.

Menstruation is normal and natural. Women use to refer to it as "the curse," but most women today refer to it as their "period." Girls who understand this process and have a healthy attitude about it, come to feel that it is an expected part of growing up. Some women experience discomfort with menstruation. Others experience emotional changes prior to the period beginning each month. If these are severe, a medical check-up is a good idea.



Menstrual Cycle

Boys. One of the first changes in boys is that the testicles begin to grow. Eventually, the testicles begin to produce sperm. The sperm is released when the male has an erection and ejaculates.

During puberty, boys often have erections. During an erection, the penis fills with blood and becomes larger and stiff. This often happens to boys at awkward times. Sometimes erections just happen, and sometimes they happen because of thoughts or feelings. A boy can have an erection without ejaculation.

Ejaculation occurs when millions of sperm (about 300 million in adult men) mix with a small amount of fluid called semen and are released from the penis. This can occur during nocturnal emissions (wet dreams) and is a normal process.



Illustrations from *Family Guided Sex Education* by Sally Kees Martin, Nevada Cooperative Extension Service, University of Nevada Reno.

IT'S YOUR TURN

Your Birth

Ask your parents about your birth. See if they have any pictures, certificates, hospital bills or information they wrote down about the event. Ask how they felt about your birth, and also the increased responsibilities and adjustments of being parents. Ask about:

- Who was there? Who helped?
- What was the setting?
- What was good about it? What was hard about it?
- How would it be different today?

Ask Your Parents

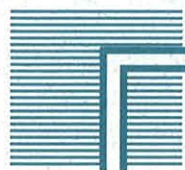
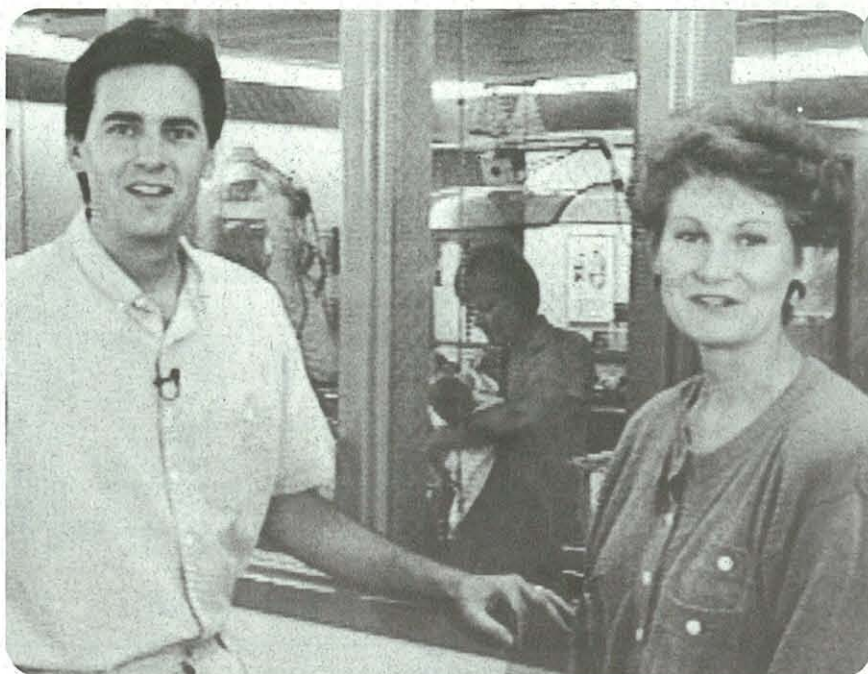
- What was something you didn't understand about sex when you were my age?
- How did you learn about sex when you were growing up?
- Why are some people so sensitive and embarrassed to talk about human reproduction?
- How old should you be to have a baby?
- Is it important to be married to have a baby?
- What are some of the best things about being a parent?
- What are some of the hardest things?
- (Girls) What if I haven't had a period yet? Am I normal?
- (Boys) What if I haven't had a wet dream yet? Am I normal?



Looking at **FACTS**



To make good decisions about anything, we have to have good information. We've got to have the facts. The facts of life are some of the most important facts to have, but they can be harder to ask about than the facts of math or geography. This newsletter, and the Facts & Feelings video #3 "Talking About Facts" can help you talk about the facts of life with your parents.



Facts & feelings

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